SPIDER-MAN® UNMASKED

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DAVID
NAUCK
CAMPANELLA

Friendly Neighborhood SPIDER-MAN®

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Friendly Neighborhood SPIDER-MAN

After revealing his identity to the world, Peter Parker has been under siege at the school where he teaches, thanks to concerned parents who are worried their kids will be at risk from super-villain attacks.

Such concerns are not entirely baseless, as Francis Klum, a.k.a. the new Mysterio, has now proven. The villain made his move on Midtown High, transforming it into a haunted house and trapping Peter, Flash Thompson, the principal, Ms. Arrow (the new school nurse), and a small group of kids inside.

But even for Mysterio, not all is as it seems. He now finds himself face-to-face —or bowl-to-bowl, rather— with someone else who purports to be Quentin Beck, the original, now-deceased Mysterio...

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WILL YOU KEEP THESE PEOPLE BACK, TERELLI?

OKAY, EVERYONE BACK, BACK AWAY FROM THE BARRICADES, PLEASE!

CAPTAIN, CAN I *SHOOT* A FEW OF THEM JUST TO GET THE POINT ACROSS?

NO.

AT LEAST THREATEN TO?

NO.

OKAY, SIR, BUT YOU'RE JUST MAKING THIS TAKE LONGER.

LOOKS LIKE I PICKED THE WRONG WEEK TO GIVE UP SMOKING.

WHO THE HELL IS IN THERE, ANYWAY?

HIS NAME IS FRANCIS KLUM. BUT HE LIKES TO PRETEND HE'S MYSTERIO.

OH, YEAH? AND HOW DO *YOU* KNOW--

HOLY--!!!

THE REASON I KNOW THIS SHOULD BE *READILY* APPARENT.

I WAS WATCHING THIS FIASCO ON THE NEWS AND IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED THE TYPE OF SMOKE BEING USED. ONE OF MY SIMPLER TRICKS, REALLY.

SO I DECIDED TO SWING BY AND LEND A HAND.

GET SPIDER-MAN OUT OF OUR SCHOOL

PETER PARKER MENACE!

I HATE A MYSTERY PART 2 OF 3

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"LEND A HAND?"

LAST I CHECKED, YOU WERE ONE OF THE BAD GUYS.

CAPTAIN, CAPTAIN...HAVE YOU NEVER HEARD OF *THE ART OF WAR*?

I DON'T GET OUT TO THE MOVIES MUCH.

"THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY IS MY FRIEND."

NONE OF YOUR PEOPLE CAN PENETRATE THAT CLOUD. MY HELMET, HOWEVER, WILL PROTECT ME.

WISH ME LUCK, "FRIEND."

WE'RE JUST LETTING HIM *GO*, CAPTAIN?

I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE WE *COULD'VE STOPPED* HIM.

BESIDES, MAYBE WE'LL BE LUCKY. THEY'LL WIND UP KILLING EACH OTHER, AND OUR PROBLEM WILL BE SOLVED.

KIDS! KIIIIIIIDS!!!

NUTS! THEY WERE RIGHT *BEHIND* ME A SECOND AGO! WHERE DID--

UH-OH. *THAT* DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.

FORTUNATELY ENOUGH, THE COSTUME HAS AN *ONBOARD* OXYGEN SUPPLY AND FILTRATION SYSTEM.

SO I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT INHALING WHATEVER'S *IN* THAT STUFF AND GOING *NUTS* OVER IT.

WAIT A MINUTE. *HE* DOESN'T KNOW THAT.

MIGHT BE A WAY TO LURE HIM OUT.

ARRRRRRHHHH!!!

NO! GET AWAY!!!!

MONSTERS! MONSTERS EVERYWHERE!!!
TOO MANY OF THEM! I CAN'T FIGHT THEM--!
NOOOO! NOOOOOO!!!
THE HORROR! THE HORROR! I--
PETER? YOU OKAY?
HUH?
OH. ROGER. HEY. YOU'RE HERE TOO, HUH?
WELL, I AM THE PRINCIPAL, PETER, SO I'M USUALLY THE LAST ONE OUT OF THE BUILDING.
WHAT WAS ALL THAT JUST NOW?
I WAS, UH... TRYING TO ACT SCARED. TO, UH, TO LURE OUT THE BAD GUYS.
NOT CONVINCING, HUH?
LET'S JUST SAY THAT, AS A THESPIAN, YOU'RE A GREAT SCIENCE TEACHER.
YEAH, WELL, YOU WANT ACTING, GO GET TOBEY MAGUIRE.
DOWN!!!
WHA--?

IS THAT-- ARE THOSE BATS?!?!

LOOKS LIKE.

I *HATE* BATS!

EVERYBODY DOES.

HUH. MAYBE I SHOULD'VE DRESSED UP LIKE A BAT INSTEAD OF A SPIDER. STRIKE FEAR INTO MY ENEMIES...

NAH. *DUMB* IDEA.

PETER---!!!!

PETEEEEERRR!!!

MARY JANE!!!

MARY JANE!!!

THEY'VE GOT MY WIFE!

H-HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT WE JUST SAW WAS REAL?

I DON'T! BUT I CAN'T TAKE THE CHANCE!

WAIT HERE!

HERE? BY MYSELF?

SCREW THAT!

PETER! WAIT FOR ME!!

"WHO ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE?"

AUDITORIUM

YOU NEED TO ASK?

I KNOW WHO YOU'RE *PRETENDING* TO BE.

NO "PRETENDING" NECESSARY. I'M THE MAN WHOSE *CLOTHES* YOU'RE WEARING.

GOOD LORD. DID MY THIGHS *REALLY* LOOK THAT BIG IN THEM?

FWOOOF

ARRRRHHH!!!

SON OF A--!

NOW, NOW-- *LANGUAGE*. WE'RE IN A *SCHOOL*, REMEMBER. HAVE TO BE WARY OF YOUNGSTERS' INNOCENT EARS.

IT WAS A *CUTE* TRICK, THOUGH. USING YOUR NATURAL ABILITY AS A TELEPORTER TO TRY AND MATERIALIZE WHERE I WAS STANDING. BASICALLY, BLOW MY BODY *APART* FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

TRY IT *AGAIN* AND IT WILL BE THE *LAST* TRICK YOU PULL.

YOU *CAN'T* BE THE ORIGINAL MYSTERIO. QUENTIN BECK IS DEAD. QUENTIN BECK COMMITTED SUICIDE.

QUENTIN BECK *DOESN'T* DISAGREE.

WHO ARE YOU, THEN? BECK'S OLD FRIEND, DANIEL BERKHART?

NO.

BUT DANIEL'S *HERE*. HE SHOWED UP A FEW MINUTES AGO. YOUR SMOKE TRICK WAS A BEACON TO HIM.

YOU'VE BEEN HANDED A *RARE* OPPORTUNITY, FRANCIS, TO PROVE YOURSELF. TO CONQUER NOT ONLY A FELLOW PRETENDER, BUT SPIDER-MAN AS WELL.

MY *NEW* ASSOCIATES ARE *VERY* INTERESTED IN THE OUTCOME.

OKAY... ARROW. YOU WAIT HERE WITH THE KIDS.

WHERE DO YOU THINK *YOU'RE* GOING?

I'M TAKING POINT. IF THIS HALL-WAY IS BOOBY-TRAPPED, I'M GOING TO TAKE IT FIRST.

BUT WHAT IF SOMETHING HAPPENS TO YOU?

I'LL BE FINE. I'M ABOUT TO SHOW YOU WHY THEY CALL ME "FLASH."

CUTE.

IF IT INVOLVES A LONG RAINCOAT, I'M NOT SURE THIS IS THE *APPROPRIATE* TIME.

24-37-18... AAAAAND...

HIKE!!

HE'S ON THE TWENTY-- THE TEN--

COACH

HE'S GOING ALL THE WAY!!!

AND THE CROWD GOES WILD!!!

COACH

HUH?

YES, I'D SAY "HUH" PRETTY MUCH COVERS IT.

OKAY, LET'S TRY THAT AGAIN.

WE MIGHT AS WELL *ALL* GO THIS TIME, SINCE THERE WASN'T ANY KIND OF--

COACH

WHOA!!

NUTS!!!!

HEELLLLPPPP!!

I'M HERE! I'M--

WHY SUCH CONSTERNATION, SPIDER-MAN? IF SHE'S GOOD ENOUGH TO BE *YOUR* BRIDE...

...THEN CERTAINLY SHE IS WORTHY OF BEING *MINE*, EH?

PETER, PLEASE! HELP ME! DON'T LET HIM--!

PETEEEER!

PETER, DO SOMETHING! I--

SPIDER-MAN! WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

NOTHING. NOTHING AT ALL.

YOU WANT HER, DRACULA? FINE. DRAIN HER DRY. BE MY GUEST.

PITY. FOR ONE WHO HAS GAINED SUCH NOTORIETY FOR *HUMOR*, IT'S DISTRESSING TO SEE WHAT YOU BELIEVE PASSES FOR A JEST.

PETER, YOU...YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS! YOU'RE BLUFFING! THIS IS A--

NO, IT'S *ALL GOOD*, HONEY. YOU'LL BE ABLE TO USE YOUR TIME MORE *CONSTRUCTIVELY*.

ONCE YOU'RE A VAMPIRE, YOU WON'T BE WASTING *ENDLESS* HOURS STARING INTO THE MIRROR.

PEETERRRRRR!!!

WHA-WHAT ARE YOU *DOING*?!? HOW COULD YOU...?

IT'S A HOLO-IMAGE. OR A ROBOT. *SOMETHING* LIKE THAT.

BUT...

WHOEVER *BUILT* HER FORGOT TO PUT A WEDDING RING ON HER FINGER.

WHAT IF SHE'D BEEN WEARING IT AND IT *FELL OFF*?

PETER! OH, THANK GOD!

IT'S ALL OVER THE NEWS, THIS CRAZINESS AT THE SCHOOL. WHAT'S *HAPPENING* THERE?

IT'S MYSTERIO.

I THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD!

AND YOU THOUGHT I WAS DEAD.

YOU WERE. YOU CAME BACK.

THERE Y'GO. IS AUNT MAY WITH YOU?

SHE'S HERE IN THE TOWER, YES. WHY?

JUST CHECKING. I SHOULD'VE THOUGHT TO CALL *IMMEDIATELY*, BUT I WAS...IN THE MOMENT.

I'M NOT SURE WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. ARE YOU GONNA BE OKAY?

SURE. NOTHING I CAN'T HANDLE.

OH...WHAT'S FOR *DINNER* TONIGHT?

AUNT MAY'S MAKING HER MAC AND CHEESE.

GREAT! I MAY RUN LATE, SO SAVE ME SOME.

KLONG

ARROW! GET THE KIDS CLEAR! HURRY!

BUT... WHAT ABOUT Y--?

GO, WILL YA PLEASE?! RUN!

GO! GO!!!

JEREMY!!!

WHAT'RE YOU, *STUPID*?!? WHAT PART OF "GO" DIDN'T YOU *GET*?!?

SNIK

SKREEEEEE!!!

COACH

SKREEEEEEEEEE!!!

C'MON! HURRY!

COACH

WHAT'D YOU *STAB* HIM WITH?!

MY SWISS ARMY KNIFE. MY *DAD* GAVE IT TO ME.

YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO HAVE STUFF LIKE THAT IN THE SCHOOL.

ARE...YOU GONNA REPORT ME? THAT I HAD THE KNIFE?

KNIFE? *WHAT* KNIFE? I DIDN'T SEE ANY KNIFE.

DID YOU SEE A SWISS ARMY KNIFE, MISS ARROW?

COACH

NOPE. ALTHOUGH, YOU HAVE TO WONDER, FOR A COUNTRY THAT'S *NEUTRAL*, THEY'RE BIG ON ARMY KNIVES. WHAT'S UP WITH--

--THAAAAAAAAT...

HURRY! GET HER OUT!!!

WHAT DOES IT *LOOK* LIKE I'M DOIN'?!

"HOW LONG YOU GOING TO *HIDE*, MYSTERIO? HUH?"

C'MON! ENOUGH OF THIS! WHATEVER SICK JOLLIES THIS IS GIVING YOU, YOU KNOW ***NONE*** OF THE OTHERS MATTER!

WAIT A MINUTE! ***I*** MATTER! WHAT ***HAPPENS*** TO ME MATTERS!

YOU KNOW NONE OF THE OTHERS MATTER IN THE STRICT CONTEXT OF OUR INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS AND YOUR PERSONAL ENMITY FOR ME!

OH. OKAY.

NO MORE SNEAKING AROUND OR MISDIRECTION. YOU AND ME, ***MANO A MANO!*** MAN-TO-MAN!

MANO A MANO MEANS "HAND-TO-HAND," YOU IDIOT.

RIGHT. I KNEW THAT. JUST LIKE I KNEW TAUNTING YOU WOULD DRAW YOU OUT.

AND DID YOU KNOW I WOULD QUICKLY AND EASILY KILL YOU?

I KNEW YOU'D ***TRY.***

AND DID YOU KNOW THAT I, THE ***TRUE*** MYSTERIO, WOULD SHOW UP TO AID YOU IN THRASHING THIS CHARLATAN TO WITHIN AN INCH OF HIS LIFE...

...AND THEN DRAG HIM ***TWO*** MORE INCHES?

YEAH, UH... ***NO.*** ACTUALLY, ***NOT*** SO MUCH ON THAT LAST ONE.

OOOOF!

HELLO. YOU SEEM TO BE AN INNOCENT BYSTANDER IN ALL THIS.

THEN AGAIN, "SEEM" IS SUCH A SUBTLE WORD. AS IN, THINGS ARE NOT *ALWAYS* WHAT THEY SEEM.

ISN'T THAT THE *CASE*, MISS ARROW?

WHO *ARE* YOU?

QUENTIN BECK. ALSO KNOWN AS "MYSTERIO."

PERHAPS YOU HEARD THAT I WAS *DEAD*. THAT I'D TAKEN A GUN AND BLOWN MY BRAINS OUT.

LET ME GUESS. THE REPORTS OF YOUR DEATH ARE *GREATLY* EXAGGERATED.

AS A MATTER OF FACT...

...NOT *THAT* GREATLY, NO.

TO BE CONCLUDED...

Friendly Neighborhood SPIDER-MAIL

Welcome back, you wacky Spider-fans! How did you manage to go a whole month without your *Friendly* fix? If I wasn't literally inundated by all the components that go into putting together a *Friendly* book every month (script, pencils, inks, colors, sardines, duct tape), I don't know how I'd go on. Actually, I'd probably curl up into a fetal position and sob melodramatically until someone slid me the next fun-filled issue. And after the shocking reveal this month, I've got a feeling there are going to be a lot of fans practicing their fetal positioning. (What shocking reveal, you ask? Stop reading this letters page and get back to the story! Once you're done, come on back and check out the best fan letters of the month!)

Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Folks,

It is great to see that there are still comics that respect fans' intelligence (strong adherence to the ideas of quantum mechanics, continuity and Marvel's unique science); use sophisticated dialogue (Spidey and Hobby's banter); make us laugh (Spidey and Hobby's banter, again); while remaining full of suspense and packing in quite a few shocks (a villainous Ben Parker? Gasp!).

I've heard some negative responses to the possibility of Ben remaining as a villain in the Marvel Universe—people seem to think that Ben was too much of a "good guy" to ever even consider killing Spidey 2211. But as May pointed out, the real Ben Parker would never have hit Jarvis. When it comes to parallel timelines, a character may share a name, voice and even appearance with a character we know and love, but that does not mean their personality needs to be even remotely similar.

If "our" Ben came back from the dead and began killing Spideys, then we'd have a problem, but I'm really happy with things as they stand now.

In fact, I'm looking forward to next year's big crossover: HOUSE OF BEN.

Until May reveals herself to be the Golden Age Black Widow, MAKE MINE MARVEL!

Adrian J. Watts
Melbourne, Australia

It wouldn't be a *Friendly* letters column without the always punctual, usually prosaic Mr. Watts! This issue marks his third consecutive letter printed here. That's a *Friendly* record, folks, so if anyone out there is fixin' to top him, they'd better write in now!

As far as the controversy over a "villainous Ben Parker," methinks some fans need to examine their issue of *Friendly #10* a little closer. That's all I'm saying!

Dear Amazing FNSM crew,

I just recently got back into comic books, but any book I would pick up always had an overly complicated backstory. Well, when I read *FNSM #11*, I was amazed! It was simple... yet so complicated; it was brilliant, easy to understand, and so easy to get into that I am now totally hooked. It reminded me of when I was little and used to watch the Spider-Man cartoons... the stories were boiled down to the core elements and were really entertaining. This issue was like reliving that feeling again!

Thanks!
Andrew Poleon
Internet

A comic book rack can be a pretty intimidating sight when you've been out of the loop for awhile (and especially when it's surrounded by flesh-eating piranhas), so thanks for taking a chance on Friendly. You picked a perfect time to jump onboard (i.e. before those freakin' piranhas show up).

Dear Spider-Man editors,

I was reading the mail from *Friendly Neighborhood #9* and an idea came to me: what about publishing an 80-page giant issue including the Spiderman 2099/Spiderman one-shot?

It would sure beat a $4.99 special issue of Hulk which I already had half of (I'm talking about *Hulk: The End* here).

Sincerely,
Eric Bufkens
Internet

Did Peter David put you up to this? How much did he pay you? And how did he pay—cash, check, or money order?

Dearest FNSM team,

I know you hear this month in and month out, but I am probably the second biggest Spidey fan EVER!! Of course, that's assuming Stan "The Man" Lee is number one. I have been an avid reader since I could read! Shortly after, I loved copying the pictures in order to learn how to draw... but only from Spider-Man comics!

Anyway, I have to be completely honest and say that, in my eyes, *Amazing* used to be the only Spider-Man title. That all changed with *Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man #1.*

This team has brought a whole new dynamic to the Spidey realm since your intro with "The Other" (which was REALLY good by the way). The Spider-titles have refurbished my IMMENSE love for the ol' red-n'-blue (or more recently known as the red-n'-gold). In fact, it's teams like *Friendly's* that fuel the fire I have to break into the comic industry. Like I was saying, I've been keeping up with our ol' pal Pete for more years than I can actually pinpoint, and I've read many other people's fan mail, but it wasn't until *FNSM #11* that I felt the need to tell you guys how much I appreciate and LOVE the work that you do -- I'm talkin' true justice to Spidey fans of all generations!

By the way, way to go with the new team (Nauck and Campanella)!!

And on that note, I want to end with this question: As much as I dig Spidey's new look, I'm a die-hard fan of the red-and-blue suit. So, just out of curiosity from one illustrator to another, did anyone do any sketches with the web design included on the new suit? I mean, even if it was minimal (perhaps only on the gold), I would have really liked to have seen that element of the greatest super hero of all time stay.

Keep up the great work!!
Friendly Neighbohood Kris Wimberly

As a matter of fact, Kris, I don't believe the web designs were incorporated into any of the costume redesigns, but don't quote me on that. It's been awhile since we went through the process of looking for possible new Spidey costumes and it's all a little hazy at this point (as is most of my life since I started working here).

Friendly Fellows:

Seeing Peter trounce Flash was a classic moment. For one second, he probably felt like all the headaches of unmasking were worth it.

Paul Di Filippo
Internet

Amen, brother. I've been waiting over 40 years for that...and I'm only 23!

Dear Spider-Mail:

Just dropping you guys a line to say that *FNSM* is one of my favorite titles next to *Amazing*. I was reading *FNSM #10* and noticed the phrase "BAD WOLF," which was a reference to the new Dr. Who series. It was basically put there so Rose could remember to help the Doctor. Who on the Marvel staff likes Dr. Who and who is their favorite character?

William Stroud
Madison, IL.

That little shout-out was courtesy of Mr. Peter David himself, who tells me that "Sarah Jane Smith" is his favorite character. I wish I knew what that meant!

Dear Marvel guys,

I've been a Spidey fan for over ten years. (Yeah, I started reading during the Clone Saga.) Anyway, I've watched Spidey grow and make both good and bad decisions. I've always backed him. However, I am not in favor of the whole Registration Act. America is supposed to be the land of the free, but this country was built on slavery. With the Registration Act, it seems like the country is taking a step back. It's not too late for Spidey to switch sides, and he'll still be my boy either way, but when Cap or Luke knocks him into next week I won't be nearly as upset as usual.

Well, until Spidey gets a plantation and forces Luke and Cap to work without pay, MAKE MINE SPIDEY!

Larry Ware
Internet

I hear you, Larry. I'm anti-Registration myself. Good thing The Man, a.k.a. Spider-Man, isn't around to hear it, or he'd have both of us locked up. He's such a tool. And a freakin' Iron Man lackey to boot--oh, jeez! Look out, it's Spidey! Run!!!

--Michael

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